Tape: 046

Transcript of Interview with James M. Parker

Conducted by Hans Stuart and Jim Muhn

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Transcription PARKER

Side A

BLM History

INTERVIEW WITH J. PARKER [JAMES M. PARKER]

[Interview conducted by Hans Stuart and Jim Muhn of the Bureau of Land Management Service Center, presumably sometime between 1986 and 1988]

STUART: We've got kind of an updated outline on the history and some examples of some of the sidebars that people have written, the features are going to shrink down to about one page of the text. Then we have a list of the sidebar articles. We've made a lot of progress since we've seen you last.

PARKER: Good.

MUHN: Let put it this way, I think we've made a lot of progress, but I think at the same time, my feeling is we're losing a lot of ground too, because some aspects have been so overwhelming.... There is just no way we can get there with [everything] we want ... we've had excellent responses from some of the states and a lot of people they think we ought to talk to; we simply don't have time. We've been very, very selective, but we hope maybe through some other means we can get a program going where people in the various states will meet with a lot of these retirees and maybe even get a chance to record them. When we see Irving Senzel tomorrow, we're hoping that maybe we can get through him and that new Public Land Foundation.

PARKER: Yes, I was going to say they just recently have done their first mailing and I talked to George Lee the other day and he wasn't sure what kind of response they were going to get back ... they basically had this network with people they knew. You've got about 1500 names on that file. We're just finalizing our list now and we're going to compare those once he gets back and sees how many are dead.

STUART: I gave John Moeller an updated list of the Directors' addresses and now I think I should give one to George Lee.

MUHN: We only have two directors we haven't heard from so far. Berklund,

STUART: Who's in Spokane. We know he's there.

MUHN: but since we haven't heard from him, maybe he's down in Arizona or Florida for the winter, we're not really sure. And then a lot of people have told us that Woozley was deceased and all of a sudden somebody came up with an address through his son in Utah. So, we've written a letter and have not gotten a response back.

PARKER: I have never heard of him dying ... he would be pretty old.

MUHN: If nothing else we found a pretty good write up that he did in 1960 on his tenure in the BLM. He talks about a variety of issues and it's only seven months before he's out of the Eisenhower Administration and Kennedy comes in.

PARKER: He had a little thing he wasn't going to leave ...

MUHN: Are you maybe confusing him maybe with Clawson?

PARKER: No, Clawson did the same thing. Woozley did the same.

MUHN: Because I know Woozley passed up the opportunity to run for Governor of Idaho because he really enjoyed what he was doing back in BLM.

PARKER: Yeah. He wasn't going to leave; he had an associate at that time that you don't find [now]; the guy that hired me for BLM.

STUART: Did he stay with the Bureau?

PARKER: No, he left when Woozley left.

MUHN: We can go through various things and maybe we can figure out who the associate was ... I found a kind of mine of information, a little thing I accidentally ran across in the Library; they hadn't done anything with those there were just stacks some place. It was called BLM Management Notes.

PARKER: I was editor of that.

MUHN: Our edition only goes up to about 1960 and then it stops. Is that when it about ended? Because it started about 1952, under Clawson in '53, and then it ran ...

PARKER: Let's see, it ran through, I think the last articles I think when I stopped doing it, it stopped. Landstrom, I guess ... I don't think we did under Stoddard at all.

STUART: Do you know why this was started? Because we had, was there a regular newsletter and then Our Public Lands?

PARKER: Well, there was a couple. Our Public Lands was going when I came with the Bureau; Management Notes had been kind of off and on again a little bit, but it was really designed to fulfill a need to kind of do management improvement. It evolved into, more into a Director's philosophy, kind of a counterpart to something the Park Service was doing called 'Park Facts,' at

the time which was really ideas on what to do but it evolved more into a way for the Director to get messages out.

STUART: Was that an all employee kind of newsletter?

PARKER: Yeah. I'm not sure if it was all employees, probably our distribution didn't send many things to all employees.... Then we started one called 'Personnel Highlights' and the two of those competed a little bit in terms of stuff. I think that Management Notes kind of just died of inattention and 'Personnel Highlights' then kind of picked up a little bit of that stuff for the Director's message and then got killed because of Freedom of Information [Act] ... Some people didn't want to see who was getting promotions and who wasn't. It got trans ferred to the Service Center and then got shot out of the saddle. We tried to reinstate that this last year, and it didn't quite fly through, but it was a good idea.

MUHN: Well, as long as we're already into your sordid past with BLM, why don't you give us a background. When did you start with BLM, what have you done, why are you where you are today?

PARKER: That's a good question! I started with BLM in 1959 or 1960. I came back to Washington. I'd been here in the military, and I wanted to come back to ... go back to school at the American University or Georgetown at that point. I needed a summer job, and I really wanted to work on the Hill; I wanted a patronage job, being an elevator man or something.... The only jobs they had were at Venable Wright [[??]] when I showed up, in the mailroom, and I didn't want to do that. The Congressman I was working through said "Ed Woozley owes me a favor. I just introduced him at some banquet in Idaho." And he said I'll get you a job, so he walked down and said, "I want you to hire this guy." So, I came down and they hired me as a GS 5. I don't know if I was a personnel specialist or a student aid.

I started out in the Personnel Office. My first assignment was to read all the Bureau manuals. They didn't know quite what else to do with me. They said that was a good orientation for

the Bureau. So, I spent a week reading the Bureau manuals and when I got through with that, I said, "OK, I've read the manuals." Then they said, "why don't you write us a report on what you think about the manuals." I ended up working in what was called the Management Improvement Office at that time, which kind of evolved eventually into Management Research, what's now Management Research. It was about a three-man office and in some ways acted as a special assistance to the Director kind of office. It was housed in this corridor, and did a lot of that kind of jobs, so I immediately had good exposure to this hallway and what was going on.

I liked that so much, I decided not to go to school full-time. My plan was to go to school full-time and work part-time, but I kind of was interested in what I was doing so I decided to go to school at night. My night program was really better than my day program anyway.... In order to stay on the rolls after my student thing ran out, I had to take a typing test to become a GS 3 clerk typist, so I started going the opposite direction. Stayed in that until I could take the test to come on as professional and became a Management Analyst, GS 5, again.

STUART: Where did you go to school for your undergraduate degree?

PARKER: I graduated from Weber State, in Ogden, Utah. That was a two-year school at that time. Then during the time, I was in the Army, I had gone to the University of Maryland. I just about got enough credits to graduate at that point. I left the Bureau for nine months or so to get married and worked for a consultant during that time. Came back to do graduate work and came back to the Bureau then, and basically stayed with the Bureau. I worked as a Management Analyst here, that's when we went under Stoddard through what was known as the Shipman study, the reorganization. Basically, with the intent of putting together the land office and the rest of the Bureau. It was probably at that point where the Bureau really started to integrate. It was integrated kind of organizationally, but the land offices were still land offices. There was one side of the Bureau that was land office ... and one side that was more resource management. We just started to get in a few exotic skills; we hired our first archaeologist, our first economist,

and we were trying to look to where we were going to go. The Shipman study was kind of designed to do that.

STUART: And when was that ... under Stoddard?

PARKER: Yes, that was maybe about a year into Stoddard's tenure. So that was probably about 1962, '63, sometime in there. George Shipman was a professor at the University of Washington.... Dave Paulsen, is he still in Nebraska? Did you ever find him?

MUHN: No, we just got that dissertation.

PARKER: Dave was the graduate student assigned to work on it full time. He worked on it for about a year or two and did his dissertation at the same time. Dr. Shipman brought in a couple of other professors and then there were two of us from the Bureau who worked on that full time ... we went all over the Bureau and did a lot of interviews and a lot of documentation, kind of where we were and where we should be going.

There were a few very influential people who probably influenced that more than others. Because they were kind of farsighted in what they were trying to do at the Bureau. Russ Penny is one of those, and Turcott is probably another that had some strong reports that were sent in. But that study has an outgrowth of that study anyway and we started the area manager concept. We started planning systems. Bob Jones had come on and we were trying to look at planning and policy to get it together and we established an organization unit called Policy and Planning, or Planning and Policy, doing some long range thinking, but out of that evolved the area manager's concept which had really been more or less [what] Penny had used in Idaho and was trying to use in California that kind of went against the grain of where the Bureau was.

But we institutionalized that, we set up about six or eight pilot Districts, and I was sent to Boise to monitor those. Boise was one of the Districts, so I had a choice of going to several different places, but Boise seemed to be the best

location for travel and that ... [BLM] had one in the O&C and Boise, and Price, Utah. I think there was one in Phoenix, Arizona, one in New Mexico; Colorado I think had one and I'll say Montana was one.

We instituted an Area Manager Program and tried to figure out what they should become, what they should do. We could see that if you're ever going to bring all that together that you really had to have one person responsible at the closest level to the ground, because we didn't have very good resource information yet. Basically the grazing folks, but when you started to have more conflicts in the environmental movement, it was just starting and new laws coming in that area, it became very obvious that we were going to be brought to a standstill if you didn't have somebody who became the focus of all that and what was happening very often, and Idaho was a very good example; I don't think I mentioned that to you before. We would go out and do a big reseeding project at the same time the land office over here was transferring it out for agriculture. We had a huge big billboard out there that I used to really laugh at. It would say this reseeding project is going through the Bureau of Land Management, and it was all potatoes everywhere you can see! Somebody came in on the Desert Land Act and they filed on that thing, because we had already been in there, and already prepared it for us. That was happening all the time so we decided hey, that just can't go on.

So, we stayed with that project until they kind of got on the ground with both the planning end and the Area Manager Concept, and that rolled over to the Bureau. We adopted that for every office and had some big conferences during that period, '65, '66, with all the new people that were going to become managers and looking at their training. I moved from Boise then to the Service Center but still worked for the Washington Office.

STUART: One question, it's kind of unclear, was it a District Office System?

PARKER: There were Districts in Denver.

STUART: Were the Districts the old land offices, and how did that work with the resources people?

PARKER: In the early, very early ’60s, I think this may have predated the Shipman thing, I'm not sure. We declared all of those offices to be Districts. Some of them were old Land Offices. There were Land Offices, there were Grazing Offices and Forestry Offices. In Missoula, some of those, were Forestry Offices. You always had to keep track of who was what office; they all became District Offices. There must be an order or something that does that.

MUHN: That came up when BLM was created, from my research. They went to that system.

PARKER: Yeah. They didn't change that.

MUHN: They had District Land Offices, and then they had District Grazing Offices and Forestry Offices; particularly in the O&C area.

PARKER: Alaska for example, was really confused because it had a State Office and then two Land Offices still they were the last ones to have two Land Offices and a District Office, I think, which were all separate. That's all they had; it was really strange.

Fairbanks was a very independent kind of office. That stayed for many years as a Land Office operation. Every time we'd get congressional support to keep it, and they wanted to be independent. It was an interesting time for us because they were totally different.

MUHN: Wouldn't you say that it still exists today in Alaska, despite all the reorganizations, almost another state office with their little Service Center, as compared to Anchorage?

PARKER: Partly, it's just geographic because if you're going to go someplace, you really have to go into Anchorage or into Fairbanks to get to anywhere else, so part of that is just physical location. In fact, even to move one or two employees, we had to put together adjudication, and it got stopped by the Congress for moving the adjudicators. So, what they eventually did was move them one at a time until there was nobody there. They finally got their automated system, so it really didn't matter, but very heavy congressional interest in those kind of things.

STUART: Bob Faithful was mentioning that about Alaska. We were talking to him and Vince Hecker yesterday about how Congress is very interested, the delegation from Alaska is very interested ...

PARKER: Still is. That's really why we have the Alaska program still. But they are unique in some ways but they also have a major capital and cadastral budget, about 15 to 18 million. The survey is there, and we cut that down every year cause we know they're going to put it back. You know you've got to cut some place, so you take that out of your budget and you know it's going to be put back. It's a little game that we go through, and they know what we're doing. That State more than any other was unique and it’s probably in the last vestiges of that in that organization.

STUART: Can I go back just a little bit. Did we have State Offices then, late '50s early '60s?

MUHN: '54.

STUART: Did it [Alaska] work for a Regional Office?

MUHN: When you created the Area Offices, they had the State Offices.

PARKER: Yes. The States were like the Districts under the Area offices, but the Area Offices never really functioned very well. That was before my time, but from what I heard people say it was always a big battle and, because of the focus, always came down to the states. The areas were just kind of always in conflict. We ended up eventually with two areas in essence and that was Portland and Denver; they were the last vestiges of the area organization.

STUART: That says why the Service Center was active.

PARKER: Well, partly. They kept the administrative centers there ... they kept those two administrative centers but that's really what they were. When I went to the Service Center in '64, the Director was an Administrative Director, but I didn't report to him because I didn't fit in that organization. We started adding a few more people in that didn't fit and they all reported to Washington. So, you had a whole bunch of little fiefdoms out there and we tried to sort that out. That was one of my jobs. We had a guy named Lowell Puckett under the Director there, and we told him his job was to provide administrative support to those people, so he would stand outside of the elevator sometimes and click off when people went to lunch or went to break. And sometimes you'd just be going between floors and he would check you off, it was just a strange thing. He had been an old area person but eventually as we started to add wildlife people, and that's really what we did, the Bureau would get one wildlife person (and there were some people who thought that was too many). We had to put them someplace and we'd put [them] in the Service Center and they serviced other states. The concept of the Service Center grew out of that thing and we got a new Director then it kind of blossomed into that. It was really the administrative part and then there was a scarce skills [part] that nobody else had. Then eventually the states would start picking up their own Archaeology.

R.D. Neilson, who was in Utah, was one of the great critics of the Service Center, although he used it more than anybody else. He was one of those kind of guys who recognized he needed those kind of skills and those kind of inputs, but he was also a very strong critic of the Service Center and he got the first

Archaeologist; that was a major crisis in the Bureau: "what's R.D. hiring his own archaeologist for?"...

STUART: That is interesting because the Service Center now still is administrative and scarce skills.

PARKER: Yeah. We kind of went back to that obviously. It kind of went full cycle, and it turned out during one period there the Service Center had a lot of people in that scarce skills thing, but there weren't scarce skills anymore. They got kind of frustrated as to what's our role and we looked at them for a while as an extension of the Washington Office and did we want to keep the WO small, we'll give them assignments. And they reported directly to each other for a time and that didn't work well either because some staffs did a lot of coordination and other staffs didn't even talk to those people out there, so they were doing their own thing. Staff back here was constantly fighting with them about what they're doing. We went through what we called 'WAR sheets:' Work Assignments Records, and they're called something else now, but they were W A Rs but they became known as war sheets because that was how you fought, and at that point write them a whole bunch of WAR sheets and they'd have to respond back. The Service Center went through an evolutionary period.

I guess it would've been the '60s is when the Portland decision was made to close down the Portland SC. The Department was going into what they had, a consolidated administrative service. It was bigger than just BLM there, [but] we were a big player in that. The Department decided to do away with that because it was costing them too much money. That was kind of the genesis of OAS, and some other things came out of that, but they moved all those people over to service BLM and they became my employees. The records improvement project had been moving around. It ended up in Portland and we decided to keep them there until they finished and not move them from state to state as they had been, partly because of Alaska they were doing part of Alaska ...

STUART: Was that Records Improvement the one that was started in the '50s where everybody updated to the Master Title Plats?

PARKER: Right. California was one of the last ones, Utah was the first one under that system. They were the pilot. Then it kind of went to Colorado ... then they moved to Portland. The reason I remember that is I was acting Service Center Director the first time I had ever been there, and I had Christmas Eve to notify them that they were terminated.

It was a little group of them, kind of a liaison group in Denver, and then the bigger group, it was like 70 people, in Portland ...

END OF SIDE A

PARKER: We had also in that period of Lead State Concept for a while ... some people wanted to move to that and get away from the Service Center thing where one state would have responsibility for certain functions, like archaeology or something. We also had a regional, within State and sometimes across state boundaries, minerals organization ... minerals economists and things like that. Kind of a vestige of that is the regional coal evaluation teams. Although they came out of MMS, it worked like that. It didn't work well in whatever district they were in, servicing them about 90 percent and the others 5 percent or whatever state, so they eventually went back into the SC ...

STUART: If we can get back into that Area Manager Concept, how long did it take to get area managers, area offices established?

PARKER: We did it, just bam! Once we had done the pilots, we just sent out a criteria and have every state do it. So they immediately did it; many of them only appointed an Area Manager and used just in the District Office, but we structured the paper flow and the delegation of authority and one of the key things on that was we developed a form on who could sign what, but forcing area managers to sign. So, we took things away from the District Managers.... There was the Forester and the Forestry Officer, I think it was called, and the Lands Officer.

They had signed but we took that away from them and forced it into the Area Managers.

STUART: How did you do that was that the directive system?

PARKER: Yes, it was very much by then. We had some big meetings where we brought in all those people who were appointed Area Managers, and all the District Managers. First time the Bureau had ever done that.

STUART: Wasn't it '64 when all the DMs got together for the first time?

PARKER: I think we may have had all the DMs together and then we had some two or three meetings in Portland. It was the biggest meetings the Bureau had ever had. We were really a parade of the political; what people might say if they knew we were getting a hundred people together and it was kind of funny because now we have every meeting we have, it's that. That was a big deal! We had done a lot of preparation, a lot of overheads.

One of the things Shipman did that was good, I think, is we had some kind of Management Psychologist and others who we were able to draw on because of the University, who gave us some good clues on some things to do. We initially called the Area Managers "Resource Area Managers" that was their title, and they became what is known as the RAMS. I'm not quite sure how this all happened, but the Director and some of the State Directors did not like that title. It started to kind of develop into like a sheep ram. You know with horns, that was kind of a symbol. People were using that symbol sometimes for various reasons, and kind of by fiat, the "R" was taken off ... they didn't want the 'RAM' connotation. I remember I wrote a poem, a joke, about a RAM. Suddenly it went clear through the Bureau everybody had a copy and they read it at one of those big meetings.

The Area Managers had some protest to the Director, they did in a humorous way, but it wasn't humorous.... It just struck me as

very funny, it tells you something about how people react. There were some very strong feelings ... the Bureau gave them a charge to take over now, "You've got to sign," and so they were in there fighting for their rights and somebody was doing a little cutting back on them ... But that became the issue of the title, which was kind of funny. You know, what difference did it really make?

MUHN: I guess one thing we should go back about, to you over your career, what has the been the most important issues that you think, one, that the Bureau's had to wrestle with; also, yourself.

PARKER: I think the initial one was bringing together those divergent parts of the Bureau, because when I came to the Bureau, they were still very divergent. There were still people who were Land Office people and it was kind of a thing when I came in and I recognized this; the social structure if you want to associate yourself with the Land Office people or with the Resource people.

We had some very strong Division Chiefs here. The Division Chief of Forestry for example [had] a big staff; very strong individual, personality wise, he was really in charge of the Forestry Programs, and he didn't mess with any of that. He called the shots for the Director; he was involved but he really wasn't. Woozley tended to be more oriented to the Land Office side partly because of his political philosophy, I think, and the disposal and the dilemma of disposal vs. retention was very much on the burners, and the mandate that we had at that time was really still disposal. There was no organic legislation. We just had that myriad of laws that told us to do all these different things, but the basic mandate was one of disposals.

STUART: Then you had that massive backlog.

PARKER: Yeah. We were going into the oil and gas thing. One of my first assignments was to look at oil and gas fraud. I remember going out to Wyoming, it was my first field [assignment]. Although I'd grown up in the West, I really

didn't know much about BLM. In fact, I probably thought it was part of the Forest Service all the time because I had no idea. I had given a talk on conservation for the sons of the American Revolution and won a prize which was a week with the Forest Service during the summer to go on a tour with [the] Forest Service. And I did, and I remember talking about all the public land issues and grazing and things, and I never realized there was another agency there doing that, even having grown up around that.

MUHN: I was born and raised in Colorado, and I really did not know, I'd seen their signs and never gave them any thought when I was in college. But did not know that the organization existed till after I got out of school.

PARKER: I must've known about them, but I had no concept of the image of the Land Office.... When I started working for the Bureau, that was one of the things that struck me first, there was no image. It was a split image, depending on who you were or where you came from. The grazing folks were very strong, so you had the forestry folks, the grazing folks, and the land office folks.

Now there were a few other peripheral things around like the fire organization, but it just kind of [was] there because it was convenient. The Land Office was a dominant factor at that point. That kind of became one of my crusades, to see it got put together. Another thing that tended to do that, and this may seem a little strange, but when the Bureau moved into an integrated paperwork management system, that was a major step for them. Because we issued directives basically forestry directives. We were still doing that kind of stuff. The Bureau made an attempt to put it all into one system. The manuals were there but were kind of weak; everything else just went out as directives and that's where you can get a Division Chief contradicting what the Bureau was doing. Otherwise ... it put a control on that. Plus, it went through and identified all the Bureau's functions and grouped them into a logical sequence and said, "OK, watershed really fits with range," and that hadn't been ever really done before. That forced us into a different way of thinking plus you could go back and track who was given what direction, had to go through the system and get numbers....

That was a little traumatic. We frankly copied that system from the Forest Service.

MUHN: How long ago did that happen?

PARKER: It would've been in that same period of '60, '61, '62 ...

STUART: Pre Bob Jones ...

PARKER: Yeah. It was right at that same time we were doing all those things. It started to move probably about '60, '61.

STUART: That's one of my questions, is what you could say about Landstrom to Stoddard seems to be the person who really started a lot of programs and a lot of things going. Anything you can tell us about Landstrom?

PARKER: Yeah ... maybe not all good! No, Landstrom was a strong personality; he had just graduated from law school, maybe even after he was director, he was going to law school at night. Very much on regulations ... kind of [how] a lawyer would approach that thing. Because of my thing with Management Notes, there were certain words he did not like and certain phrases or references. We had a list of words and every secretary had it; everybody had it that knew that Landstrom didn't like that word. So you didn't use certain words which is kind of [an] interesting approach. He was a little bit aloof and a little bit kind of arm’s length from what was going on. His Associate, I think, was a guy named John Crow, who came up from BIA, who was also a little bit that way, so they were a little bit kind of protected.

He did quite a bit politically. He was, one of the good things I thought he did, was he got appointed to the National Scout board. He got very interested in BLMers kind of reaching out into the community and wanted to know how many were scouters and

what they were doing, giving some emphasis to be better community members of the community you're in.

There was a lot of, during that same period, a lot of criticism from Congress about too many government trucks and too many people in our towns and don't send any more. I remember particularly, we were thinking about the Arizona Strip and how that ought to be administered. Somebody owned the Fredonia, no, the Kaibab Lumber Company, out of Fredonia which I guess is the biggest and only employer probably, besides ranchers, in the Strip. And they wanted the District Offices moved out of Saint George to Fredonia, which was a terrible town ... there was one telephone line; it was a party and everybody in the town was on that party line including company and big business ... I can remember doing a study that night, and I said, we can't put BLMers in there. One, it was a hostile environment to them anyway. The solution was, well, move some of them over closer to that area and put them into Moab. People in Moab didn't want them. When that got out immediately, they rose up in arms: "we don't want any more of those people in here; we don't like the BLMers that are here, we don't want them in here." It was only about 3 or 4 years later we tried to pull some people out Moab and suddenly it was "well, they're the heart of the community." You know, "they're the only ones with college educations besides the schoolteachers and they're the backbone of the PTA and they're this and that"... Landstrom may have had something to do with that. He was oriented that way ... he was an interesting guy.

STUART: Why did Landstrom leave?

PARKER: He was displaced.

MUHN: He was kicked upstairs into one of the Secretary's Offices, right?

PARKER: Let's see. Tom Floyd and I, the guy who worked on the Shipman study, we sat in offices where Charlie Grymes is; he and I, and that's a little office ... Anyway, one morning we came down and all of our stuff had been moved into the back of the

room, and Karl Landstrom's desk, his file cabinets ... were in the room. So, he came down and sat there for a week and never said a word to us. We would say good morning to him, and he just didn't talk. He made a lot of phone calls and would ask us to leave every time he made a phone call. Then he got appointed as an Assistant to the Secretary for Land and Tenure, but he was basically deposed.

STUART: Somebody had just decided he wasn't doing his job well enough?

PARKER: Yeah. I can't remember that story and I don't know all that happened. ... he has come to hearings sometimes and he writes articles occasionally. I haven't seen him for the last 3 or 4 years, but he stayed fairly interested in land management.

MUHN: There is sort of a common thread, though, between many of the first five directors except Johnson, who just plain disappeared. When they leave the BLM, they're, it's almost as if a coup, and they've left under a cloud and a little blood is spilled ... I mean, Clawson's removal was a little bloody although he doesn't say that in his memoirs.

STUART: And Woozley didn't want to leave. And Landstrom ...

PARKER: It's kind of interesting because you compare us to the Forest Service and when we were doing interchange the last couple of years. Max Petersen, who was the chief, really wouldn't make a commitment to us until he checked it out with all the former chiefs they had a little network when they'd meet regularly and they're kind of a board of directors. He wouldn't buy into supporting that idea I'm sure until after ... I don't know this for sure, but I can just see that he mentioned it "I'm going to meet the former chiefs next week. Maybe we could schedule the meeting after that." I had to see if he was going to run that by them. But they have a close contact there and even with their retired employees ... the Bureau has had a culture and partly I guess because of the way people leave and

because they're outsiders to BLM. It's almost hands off: stay away from those people. We were looking for the addresses of this and that, and nobody had those addresses other than maybe people that they knew or had worked with them. That network isn't there it’s almost like you don't want to talk to somebody who's retired because you might be accused of something, or you don't want to bring in the retirees because "why would you do that?" Which is an interesting thing: one of the things in [Project] Pride was we decided to do a better job.

George Lee's organization may be helpful there, but even then, they didn't want to affiliated with us and se offered to have a closer thing, and they really didn't want to do that. That was their input to us: "leave us alone; we'll come and talk to you."

That may be partly because the Bureau represents within the Bureau a lot of different philosophies. Even those are at cross purposes, so when they go out in it, they follow that little philosophical bent, they kind of become opponents of the Bureau because everybody is an opponent in one way or another. If you're really into wild horses and you really want to do something on the outside on wild horses, you're with groups that are anti the Bureau; the same with minerals you can go with a consulting firm like Dale Andrus or some of those guys, you become an advocate against the environmentalists and if you, like Joyce Kelly, went out and became a advocate on [wilderness] you know it's that kind of adversarial role.

STUART: Ron Hofman had a real good point. We talked to him a couple of weeks ago because he was in Denver on business. Talking about how the Bureau lacks a multiple use constituency ...

PARKER: I don't know if you'll ever have that though ... you know we view multiple use as desirable; we think that's neat. Most real people, I think, eventually internalize it that that's our mandate and yet there is no support for multiple use. There's no support from the Hill.

STUART: His theory is it could go badly for the Bureau's future. If you can't get any support for a multiple use ...

PARKER: Yes, but even those people who wrote those laws and promote that, McClure and some of those, when it comes down to it, multiple use is almost a guise to do what they wanted to do out there.

STUART: Some are more equal than others.

PARKER: Well, but you're talking about both sides; you were at the hearing yesterday. You heard Vento say, well you know, the Forest Service came for 2.3 billion and we're going to give them more money. You have got more acres, why aren't you asking for a billion.

STUART: Or, "why do you have so few employees?"

PARKER: Yeah. And it's always that way. When we got into the interchange in Nevada we thought, hey, they're going to really like us because BLM only spends $1.70 per acre and Forest Service spends $2.90 or whatever it was. They didn't like us for that. I told the Director yesterday he should tell them if you were the head of a corporation or run a business, they wouldn't be promoting you because you save money and still doing the same job and here they're criticizing you. I've been trying to do the job the way I thought it was right and you're criticizing me. Did you see the news last night? They had the Director on that; we've had a series for five days on Wild Horses and Burros bad series ... and I noticed the cameraman, he [the Director] kept telling the cameraman 'get his boots' and he stayed on his boots once for 20 minutes ... I noticed every time he would start to move his feet, the guy would shoot down to his boots. Well, apparently, on the news last night they'd just show the shifting every time they'd show his picture ... and Burford is like the most laid-back person in here that you could find; they don't intimidate him because he's been the chairman of a committee and done that same thing, and he's always pretty laid back. But that's how they portrayed him, as really being nervous.

STUART: Well, the Vento questions were interesting; his questions about "how is it affecting forage? what species? and what evidence do have about wild horses and range?" That was rough. And then you get Barbara Vucanovich asking how many orphan animals ... did you hear the gasps?

PARKER: Well, they're very much afraid of that issue and they've lobbied very hard. We tried to get the Humane Society ... we had a proposal we'd turn them [horses] over to the Humane Society just like you do dogs and cats, and we would pay them to run the shelter and they would adopt them out and boy, the Wild Horse advocates, that was the last thing in the world they wanted ... Well, they fought that hard and they got inside of the Humane Society and the Humane Society didn't want to have anything to do with it because it was too controversial and ... they were afraid it would ruin their other programs on humane destruction. But it would've been a good idea.

END OF INTERVIEW